

# Northeast (NE) Multispecies Large Mesh Fishery Exemptions



*Unless otherwise noted, the regulations described below apply to fishing vessels issued valid Federal fishing permits or any vessel fishing in Federal waters. (See 50 CFR § 648.4 for Federal fishing permit requirements.) This information sheet is only a summary of applicable fishing regulations and is not a substitute for the actual regulations which can be found at 50 CFR Part 648.*

## **Exempted Fisheries**

*Exempted fisheries allow fishing vessels to fish for specific species without being subject to certain NE multispecies regulations provided the bycatch of regulated species is minimized. Under Amendment 13, the incidental catch standard of regulated species (5 percent of the total catch, by weight) used to develop and approve exempted fisheries may be modified by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) or Regional Administrator, for those groundfish stocks that are not in an overfished condition, or if overfishing is not occurring, provided that the modification would not cause a delay in a rebuilding program, would not result in overfishing of a stock, and would not result in a stock becoming overfished. Additional factors may also be considered. The incidental catch standard may be modified either through a Council action (framework adjustment) that would change the standard for all exempted fisheries, or on a case-by-case basis for specific exempted fisheries. For directions on how to request an exempted fishery, see page 4.*

## **Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GB) Regulated Mesh Area:**

Vessels may fish in the following GOM/GB exempted fisheries in the area specified provided they comply with requirements and conditions listed for each fishery.

1) **GOM/GB Dogfish & Monkfish Gillnet Exempted Fisheries:** Dogfish and monkfish gillnet vessels may fish in the area defined by the following coordinates provided they comply with requirements and conditions below.

### **GOM/GB Dogfish & Monkfish Gillnet Exemption Area**

<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
41/35' N.	70/00' W.
42/49.5' N.	70/00' W.
42/49.5' N.	69/40' W.
43/12' N.	69/00' W.
Maine Shoreline	69/00' W.



**GOM/GB Monkfish Gillnet Exempted Fishery Specifications:**

- a) From July 1 through September 14, an exempted fishery for monkfish may be conducted by vessels using gillnet gear only.
- b) Vessels fishing under this exemption are restricted to a minimum mesh size of 10 inch (diamond) throughout the net.
- c) No species other than monkfish, or American lobster up to 10 percent by weight of all other species on board up to 200 lobsters.

**Note:** Unless fishing exclusively in state waters, to land and possess monkfish vessels are required to obtain a Federal monkfish permit and adhere to any applicable monkfish regulation.

**GOM/GB Dogfish Gillnet Exempted Fishery Specifications:**

- a) From July 1 through August 31 an exempted fishery for dogfish may be conducted by vessels using gillnet gear only.
- b) Vessels fishing under this exemption are restricted to a minimum mesh size of 6.5 inch (diamond) throughout the net.
- c) No species other than dogfish, or American lobster up to 10 percent by weight of all other species on board up to 200 lobsters.

**Note 1:** Unless fishing exclusively in state waters, to land and possess dogfish vessels are required to obtain a Federal dogfish permit and adhere to any applicable dogfish regulation.

**Note 2:** A vessel may fish in both the monkfish and dogfish exempted fisheries during the same time, provided that it only lands either dogfish and lobster bycatch, or monkfish and lobster bycatch, for each individual fishing trip.

**Southern New England (SNE) Regulated Mesh Area:**

Vessels may fish in the following SNE exempted fisheries in the area specified provided they comply with requirements and conditions listed for each fishery.

- 1) Vessels may fish with, use, or possess nets of mesh larger than the minimum size specified in the SNE regulated mesh area when fishing for the SNE exempted species: Butterfish, dogfish (trawl), herring, mackerel, ocean pout, scup, shrimp, squid, summer flounder, silver hake and offshore hake, and weakfish. Or SNE bycatch species: Conger eels, searobins, black sea bass, red hake, tautog (blackfish), blowfish, cunner, John Dory, mullet, bluefish, tilefish, longhorn sculpin, fourspot flounder, alewife, hickory shad, American shad, blueback herring, sea ravens, Atlantic croaker, spot, swordfish, monkfish and monkfish parts up to 10 percent by weight of all other species on board or 50 lb tail-weight (166 lb whole-weight) whichever is less; American lobster up to 10 percent by weight of all other species on board up to 200 lobsters; and skate and skate parts—up to 10 percent, by weight, of all other species on board.



2) SNE Monkfish, Skate & Dogfish Gillnet Exempted Fishery: Monkfish, skate, and dogfish gillnet vessels may fish in the area defined by the following coordinates provided they comply with requirements and conditions below.

### **SNE Monkfish, Skate & Dogfish Gillnet Exemption Area**

Defined by a line running from the Massachusetts shoreline at 41°35' N. latitude and 70°00' W. longitude south to its intersection with the outer boundary of the EEZ, southwesterly along the outer boundary of the EEZ, and bounded on the west by the eastern boundary of the SNE Exemption Area.

#### **SNE Monkfish & Skate Gillnet Exempted Fishery Specifications:**

- a) The exempted fishery for monkfish and skate may be conducted by vessels using gillnet gear only.
- b) Vessels fishing under this exemption are restricted to a minimum mesh size of 10 inch (diamond) throughout the net.
- c) Vessels fishing under this exemption may not fish for, harvest, possess, or land any species of fish other than monkfish and skate, the current large mesh exempted and bycatch species listed above in #1 of the SNE Regulated Mesh Area section.

**Note:** Unless fishing exclusively in state waters, to land and possess monkfish vessels are required to obtain a Federal monkfish permit and adhere to any applicable monkfish regulation.

#### **SNE Dogfish Gillnet Exempted Fishery Specifications:**

- a) From May 1 through October 31 an exempted fishery for dogfish may be conducted by vessels using gillnet gear.
- b) Vessels fishing under this exemption are restricted to a minimum mesh size of 6 inch (diamond) throughout the net.
- c) Vessels fishing under this exemption may not fish for, harvest, possess, or land any species of fish other than dogfish, and the current large mesh exempted and bycatch species listed above in #1 of the SNE Regulated Mesh Area section.

**Note 1:** Unless fishing exclusively in state waters, to land and possess dogfish vessels are required to obtain a Federal dogfish permit and adhere to any applicable dogfish regulation.

**Note 2:** Vessels may fish in both the monkfish, skate, and dogfish exempted fisheries during the same time, provided that they only land either dogfish and the current large mesh exempted and bycatch species listed above in #1 of the SNE Regulated Mesh Area section or monkfish, skate, and the current large mesh exempted and bycatch species listed in #1 of the SNE Regulated Mesh Area section.



3) SNE Monkfish & Skate Trawl Fishery Exemption: Monkfish and skate trawl vessels may fish in the area defined by the following coordinates provided they comply with requirements and conditions below.

**SNE Monkfish & Skate Trawl  
Exemption Area**

The SNE Monkfish Trawl Fishery Exemption Area is defined as the area bounded on the north by a line extending eastward along 40°10' N. lat., and bounded on the west by the eastern boundary of the Mid-Atlantic Regulated Mesh Area.

**SNE Monkfish & Skate Trawl Exempted Fishery Specifications:**

- a) Vessels fishing under this exemption are restricted to a minimum mesh size of 8 inch square or diamond mesh applied throughout the codend for at least 45 continuous meshes forward of the terminus of the net. All nets with a mesh size smaller than the minimum mesh size must be properly stowed. Nets must also be stowed when transiting to and from the SNE Monkfish & Skate Fishery Exemption Area from north of 40°10' N. latitude and bounded on the west by the western boundary of the SNE Exemption Area.
- b) Vessels fishing in this exemption may not fish for, possess, or land any species of fish other than monkfish, skate and the current large mesh exempted and bycatch species listed above in #1 of the SNE Regulated Mesh Area section.

**Note:** Unless fishing exclusively in state waters, to land and possess monkfish vessels are required to obtain a Federal monkfish permit and adhere to any applicable monkfish regulation.

**Mid-Atlantic (MA) Exemption Area:**

Vessels fishing in the MA Exemption area are exempt from the 5 percent bycatch criteria specifications and may, therefore, fish in a fishery outside of a DAS, provided that the vessel does not possess or land regulated multispecies finfish.

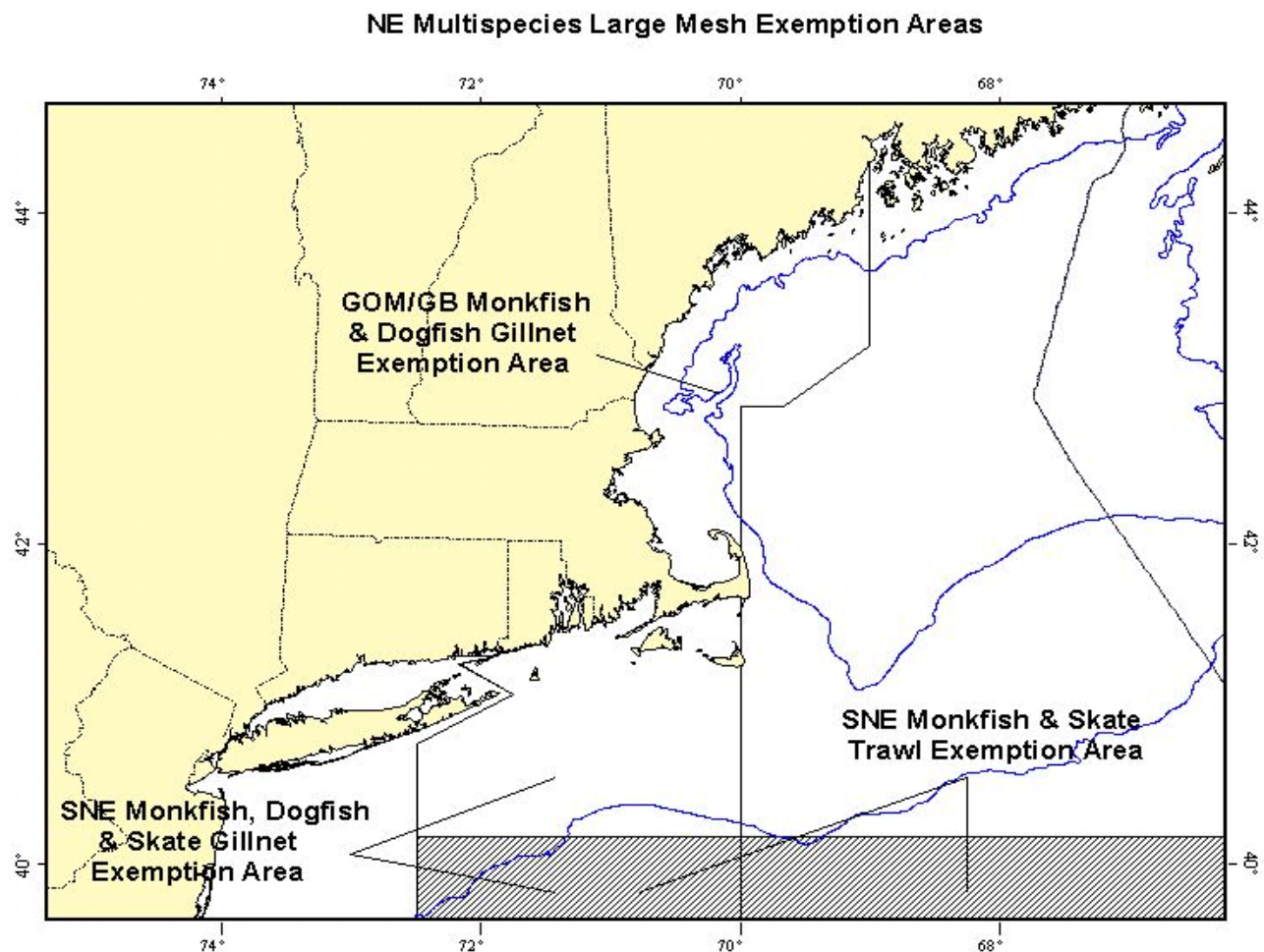
**How to Request Fishery Exemptions:**

An exempted fishery may be added, deleted or modified pursuant to the procedure described below:

1. Applicants must submit a written request to the Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298. The request should describe the area in which the fishery would operate, the period in which it would operate, the gear it would use, the approximate number of vessels likely to participate, and the species it would target, retain and land.
2. Those proposing that a fishery should be exempt should describe the fishery and present all information possible that helps determine that the fishery meets the bycatch standard. The Regional Administrator will investigate NOAA Fisheries data sources, but proposals for exemptions should be complete and clear to facilitate the process. State agencies and universities, for example, may have additional data available and proposers may contact them for assistance.



3. When a request for an exempted fishery is submitted, the request and any accompanying data are reviewed by the Regional Administrator to determine whether such a fishery would meet the exemption qualifying criteria, which are described in the first paragraph of this information sheet. The Regional Administrator will also consult with the New England Fishery Management Council on any exemptions requested. This process may take several weeks to complete.



This is a simplified summary of the measures in effect under the NE Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. You should also get a copy of the official rules as published in the Federal Register.